

A **TRUE** BOOK



The Connecticut Colony



According to legend, Joseph Wadsworth hid Connecticut's colonial charter in an oak.

KEVIN CUNNINGHAM

 SCHOLASTIC

Timeline of Connecticut Colony History

**About
10,000 B.C.E.**



**Early Native Americans
settle present-day
Connecticut and the
surrounding areas.**



1633



**The first permanent European settlement
in Connecticut is established.**

1639



The Fundamental Orders are written.

1775



**American colonists fight
first battles with the British.**



1788

**Connecticut ratifies
the U.S. Constitution.**





Native American Life

Around 16 Native American peoples settled in modern-day Connecticut thousands of years before it was colonized by Europeans. These native peoples lived in different groups. But they shared similar languages and customs. Most made their homes along nearby bodies of water. Each group claimed a territory. They set up small villages near the coast in the summer. They spent winters in forest valleys. These valleys provided plenty of trees for firewood.

Farms, Fish, and Furs

Women planted fields of maize (corn), beans, and squash around the summer villages. They also gathered seafood such as clams at the shore. Men hunted waterbirds in the marshes. They canoed into the ocean to catch fish with spears and nets. The men hunted deer, bears, foxes, and beavers during the winter. The animals provided meat. They also provided skins and furs for clothing. People turned animal bone and antler into tools.

This modern-day recreation shows what the inside of a traditional Pequot lodge might have looked like.



Women usually took charge of things around the home, including farming.

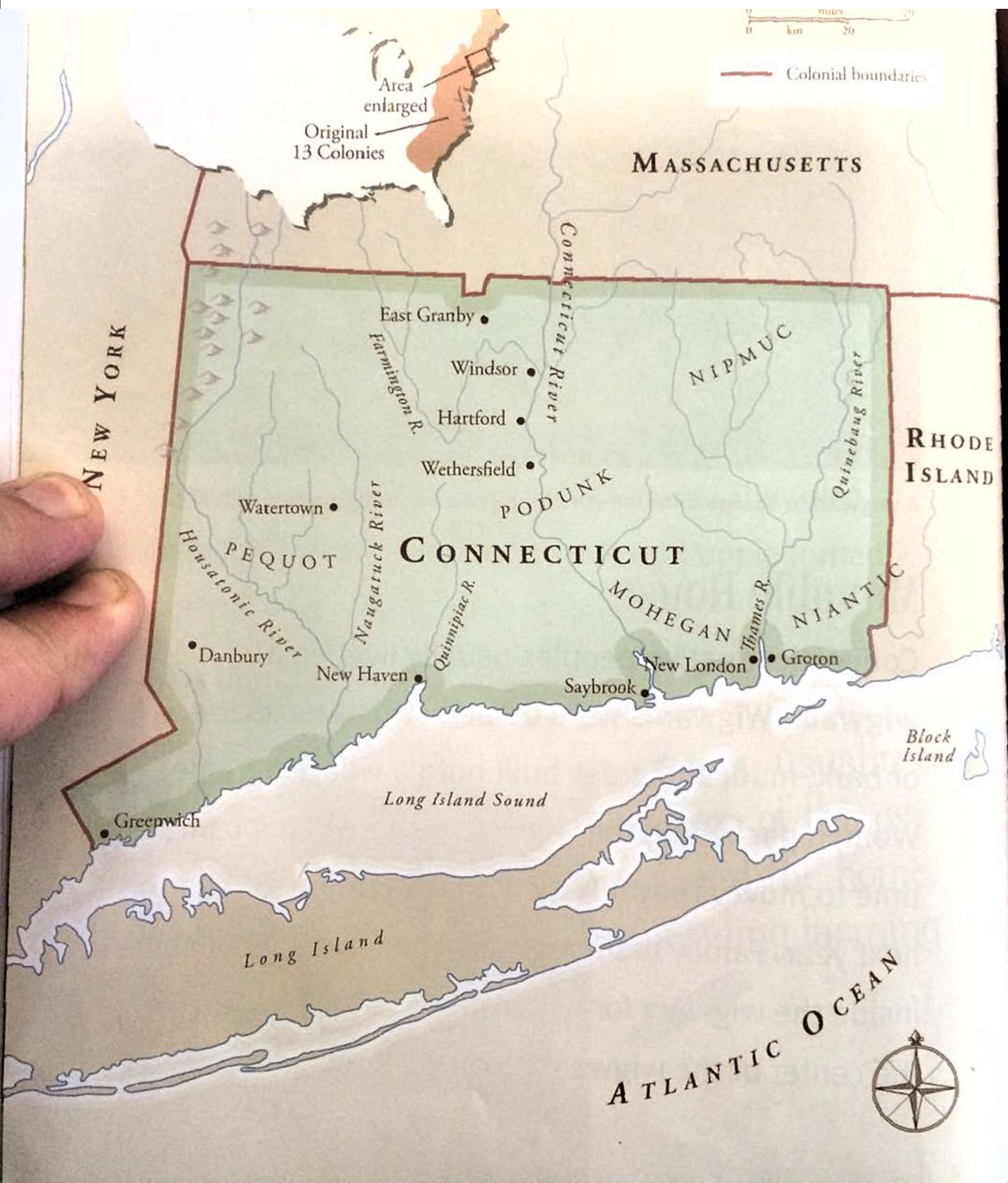




A wigwam's design enabled it to be put up and taken down quickly.

Movable House

Connecticut native peoples usually lived in a **wigwam**. Wigwams were domed structures made of bark, mud, and grass built onto a wooden frame. Women packed up the wigwam cover when it came time to move. They left the frame standing for use the next year. Family members stretched out animal skins inside the wigwam for use as beds. A cooking fire in the center of the wigwam provided light and heat.



The Europeans Arrive

Dutch trader Adriaen Block bought furs from Native Americans near present-day New York City in 1613. Block lost his ship in a fire. The natives helped him and his men survive the winter. The Indians and sailors built a boat called the *Onrust*. This name meant “restless” in Dutch. Block sailed his ship up the Quinnehtukqut River to where the Saukiog people lived. Block heard the natives’ name for the river. He spelled it *Connecticut*. *Quinnehtukqut* means “place of the long river” in Mohegan.



The arrival of Adriaen Block and other Europeans introduced unfamiliar diseases to native populations.

Diseases Bring Disaster

Diseases had killed thousands of Native Americans in villages from Long Island Sound to Maine within two years of Block's journey. Ships from Europe had recently sailed to other lands. The Europeans picked up diseases on their journeys and carried them to the Americas. Diseases such as smallpox were passed from one native group to another. Only about 6,000 to 7,000 native people remained in the Connecticut region by the time the **epidemic** ended.

First European Settlements

The Pilgrims were a group of religious outcasts fleeing **prejudice** in England. They founded Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts in 1620. A small band of Pilgrims started a new settlement along the Quinnehtukqut River in 1633. The settlers built a house near the river. They erected a wall of wooden stakes around it. This gave them protection against attacks by Native Americans and Dutch traders. They named the settlement Windsor. It was soon surrounded by farms.

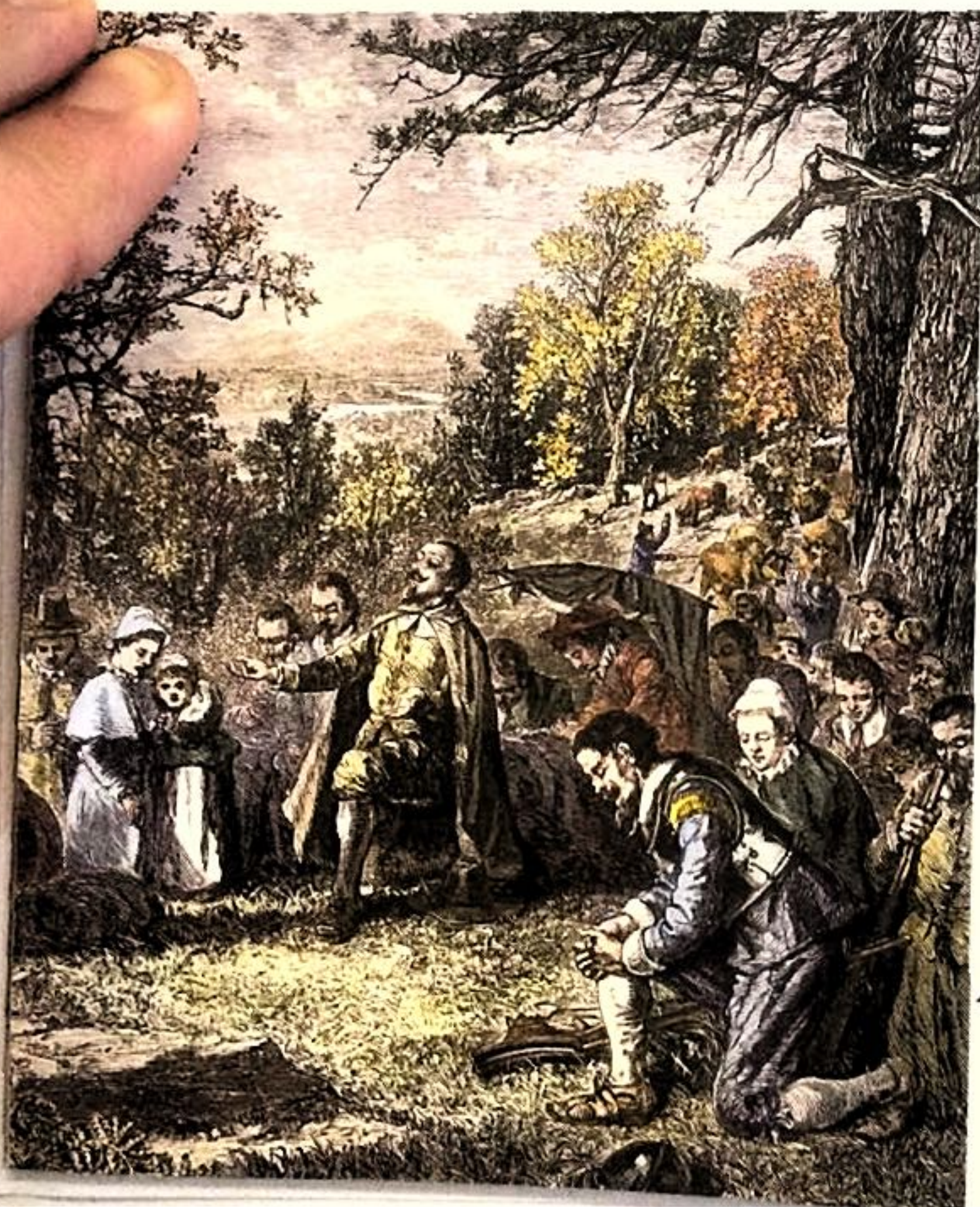
Settlers
originally called
the Windsor
settlement
Dorchester.



One hundred people settled at Windsor in its first year. Despite bad winters, more settlers continued to join them. The nearby settlement of Wethersfield had a population of 800 within a few years. One hundred people settled at Hartford. The three towns formed the Connecticut **Colony** in April 1636. The colonial leaders passed laws

that forbade the sale of guns and liquor to Native Americans.

The first Hartford settlers came from present-day Cambridge, Massachusetts.





Pequots flee a burning village during the Pequot War in 1637.

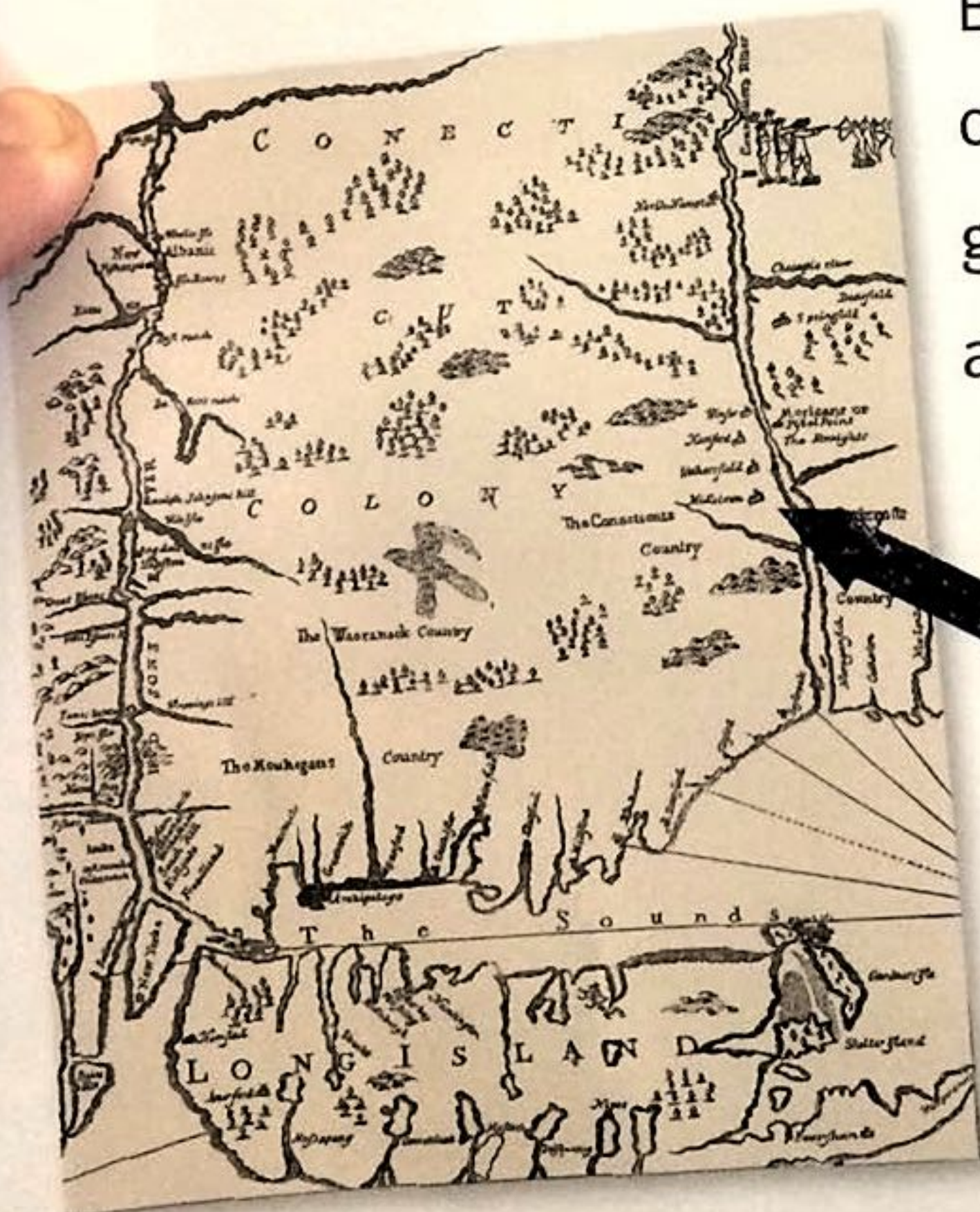
The Pequot War

The settlers battled the Pequot from 1636 to 1638. The Pequot were the most powerful local natives. The fighting ended when the Connecticut **militia** trapped more than 600 Pequot in a burning village near Narragansett Harbor. The surviving Pequot fled. But militiamen tracked them down. The Indians were either killed or sold into slavery.

A Constitution

The colony's leaders wrote the Fundamental Orders in 1639. This was a **constitution** that outlined the duties of the government. The Fundamental Orders allowed colonists to vote for a **legislature** and a governor. Only adult male property owners had the right to vote.

But choosing one's own leaders was a groundbreaking idea at the time.



The Fundamental Orders united the Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield settlements.

In Need of a Charter

About 1,000 settlers lived in the Connecticut Colony at the end of the Pequot War. New waves of settlers founded New Haven and other towns soon after the war. Connecticut's population had grown to nearly 8,000 by 1660. But the colonists had no **legal** right to settle there. The Dutch or another country could seize their land. Colonial governor John Winthrop, Jr., went to England in 1662. He asked the king for a **charter** to make Connecticut an English colony under English protection.



John Winthrop, Jr., was elected governor of Connecticut in 1657 and 1659.

Challenges Continue

Connecticut overcame several new threats throughout the late 1600s. Metacomet was chief of the Wampanoag peoples. He went to war against Massachusetts colonists in 1675.

His warriors burned homes in the Connecticut towns of Granby and Simsbury the next year.

The conflict ended when Metacomet died. England's King Charles II had given half of Connecticut to the colony of New York by then.

Metacomet, also called King Philip, led the Wampanoag during King Philip's War against the colonists.



The oak in which the Connecticut charter was supposedly hidden became known as the Charter Oak.




The Hidden Charter Trick

King James II combined Connecticut with other English colonies in 1686 to form the Dominion of New England. New England's governor was Edmund Andros. He wanted to control the legislature. He demanded that each colony turn over its charter to him. According to legend, Hartford's leaders hid the Connecticut charter in an oak tree. Andros still took charge. But the Dominion split apart in 1688 when King James II was overthrown.

Farmhouses and Schoolhouses

About 90 percent of Connecticut's people lived on farms and grew crops such as maize, peas, and tobacco during the colony's early history. Fishers hauled fish out of Long Island Sound. Whalers hunting in the Atlantic Ocean brought back whale oil for lamps and whalebone for umbrellas and clothing. But even on the coast, where fishers and whalers worked, farms usually surrounded the towns.



Connecticut farms often kept cows, pigs, and horses.

Farmwork

Early colonial families worked hard. Every member did his or her part to help with chores. Men and boys got up before sunrise to chop wood and dig ditches. They plowed and planted the fields in the spring. They picked the crops in autumn. Farmers sold the food not needed by the family in town markets. They also traded for products such as glass, guns, and metal tools.

Reenactors now work on some historic colonial farms.



←
A colonial farmer could plant an acre in a day.

Women and girls also worked long hours. They cooked and spun wool into yarn. They also made and mended clothing. Women sealed vegetables and fruits in jars in the fall for use during the winter. Families preserved meat by drying and salting it. The women also used herbs and other home medicines to treat illnesses because few physicians lived in the colony.

The women in a family kept busy all day long cooking, baking, churning butter, spinning yarn, and sewing and mending clothing.



Puritans felt that religious study was an important part of education.



Colonial Childhood

Children walked to the nearest town to attend school after finishing morning chores. Connecticut had passed a law early in its history stating that any town with at least 50 families must open a schoolhouse. One teacher taught children of all ages in a one-room building. Students learned reading, writing, and math. Teachers kept strict rules. Students were hit on the knuckles with a wooden stick if they misbehaved.

Very few colonial children attended school past eighth grade. Teenagers were expected to work instead. Boys often worked in towns as unpaid **apprentices**. A tradesman taught an apprentice a skill such as barrel making or carpentry. Girls usually stayed home and learned sewing, cooking, and other skills from their mothers. Storekeepers, lawyers, shipbuilders, and

many other skilled professionals began to settle in the towns as the 1700s continued.



A person who created the metal letters used by printers for newspapers, books, or other publications was called a type founder.

Ethan Allen's furnace was used to produce more than 800 cannonballs during the Revolutionary War.



Manufacturing

Connecticut was one of the few colonies that built factories. Factories using waterwheels for power sprang up along Connecticut's rivers around 1750. Hats made in Wethersfield and clocks manufactured in Windsor were sold in other American colonies and England. Future American Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen helped build a furnace that melted iron for cannons. Connecticut would soon need such weapons.

